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Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter
Volume 78 • No.1 January 1996

The Gull

Have We Got A Job For You!

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Up Close and Personal**
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Have we said how much we miss you? Golden Gate Audubon flourishes and succeeds only with the help of volunteers. We have a wonderful bunch of folks helping us now, from our Field Trip leaders, to our Conservation Committee members, to our tireless office helpers, but we don't have nearly enough help.

As you no doubt know, our natural world is under an unprecedented attack both in Washington, D.C. and here at home. Join one of our Conservation Committees (we have one in the East Bay and one in San Francisco) and find out how you can help save our wildlife right here at home. You decide what amount of activity you can contribute to the Committee. It may be no more than writing letters; on the other hand, perhaps you have time to attend agency meetings, or read larger documents like Environmental Impact Reports, or wish to help set our Chapter's policies on critical issues. It's up to you and all levels of activity are desperately needed.

The East Bay Conservation Committee meets at the GGAS office on the second Monday of every month at 7:30 PM. The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets on the first Thursday of every month at various committee member's houses at 7:30 PM. You attendance is welcome. Please call the GGAS Office at 510-843-2222 and get on the mailing list for the Committee of your choice. It's fun and it's rewarding.

GGAS holds over 75 field trips a year and that takes a lot of field trip leaders. We always need leaders. If you are an adequate or better birder you can lead a trip, especially in areas you go to frequently and where you are familiar with the resident birds. It's fun, you meet lots of wonderful people, and you

are helping people have a good time. If you are interested please call Russ Wilson, our Field Trip Chair at 510-524-2399.

Working in the GGAS Office is rarely dull and it is very satisfying. Your tasks can be tailored to your tastes. You can answer interesting phone calls, help file papers, mail action alerts, agendas and meeting minutes, help sell bird seed and feeders, and chat with Arthur Feinstein, our staff-person. You can learn a lot about birds and people since we have lots of reference material and people can ask some amazing questions. And you are playing a vital role in helping GGAS keep itself together as an organization. It's fun, easy, and satisfying since most tasks are jobs that have a definite and rewarding conclusion. If you are interested please call our GGAS Office at 510-843-2222.

We are also looking for an Education Chairperson. Again, the time and effort required by this position will be determined by you. GGAS educational efforts can include developing a group of speakers to make presentations to classes in our area. We already have slide shows prepared for both land and water birds and they come with accompanying text. The Audubon Adventures program is a wonderful natural history newsletter (with an accompanying teacher packet) that goes to each enrolled class six times a year. We need better outreach to teachers so that more of them make use of this wonderful natural history teaching tool. This year we succeeded in enrolling only 53 classes, while we hoped to get at least 100. Please consider re-energizing GGAS's Education Committee. You will have the full support of the Board and our staff.

There's a lot more you can do. Give us a call and join the GGAS family. We're looking forward to hearing from you!

A Walk in Strybing Arboretum, Part II

In November, we printed Part I of this series of articles about Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park. This is Part II; Part III will follow in the next month or two. We often take our local patches for granted, forgetting what a wealth of life can inhabit them. San Francisco is not a particularly "green" city in terms of widespread lush vegetation, but Golden Gate Park is a jewel and the Arboretum with its varied plantings supports an astonishing variety of birdlife. Alan Ridley, who teaches high school ornithology at the Urban School, has been hooked on birds and natural history since he was in 6th grade.

MCBEAN WATERFOWL POND

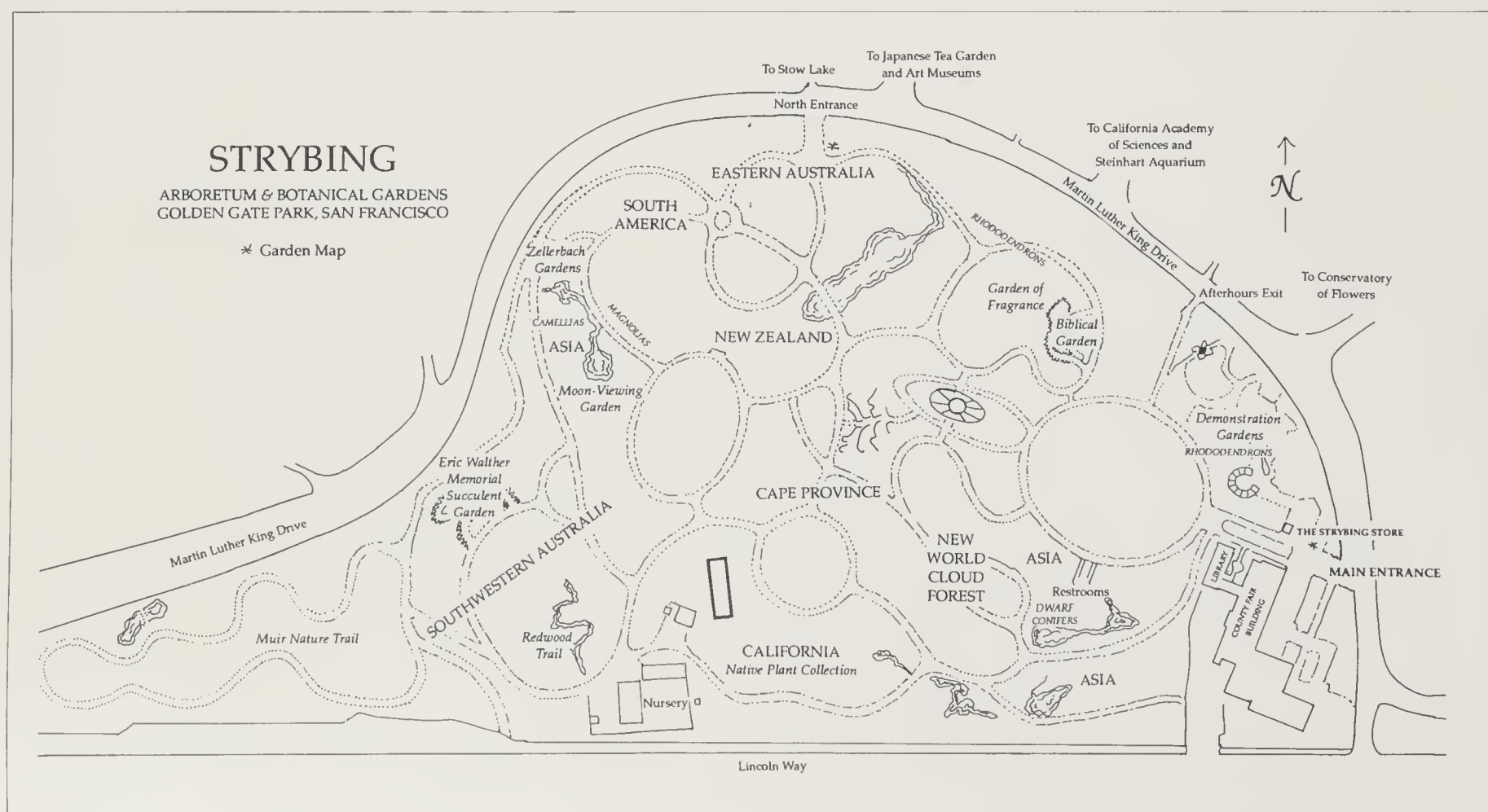
There is always bird action at the Alletta McBean Waterfowl Pond. A sign board at the north end of the bridge illustrates and describes fifteen of the species most commonly sighted on and adjacent to the pond. The diversity of species occupying the pond drops dramatically in spring as birds head off to mating and breeding grounds. On a

winter day we might encounter several species of ducks. In addition to the ubiquitous Mallard, the most common winter visitor is the **American Wigeon**. Lucky viewers will often see: **Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and Green-winged Teal**. Notice the difference in feeding behaviors - the Mallards, wigeons and teal are foragers and "dabblers" who tip up and reach down with long necks and sifting beaks to separate organic goodies from bottom mud. Scaup, Ring-necks and Buffleheads are divers, swimming about underwater as they search for aquatic invertebrates. At this pond, however, they also dive for seed distributed by visitors. Along the shore, pecking at spilled seeds, we usually find a teeming flock of **Rock Doves**, a more exciting name for the common pigeon, and **Brewer's Blackbirds**, the males cocking a yellow eye for seed as they stride about.

Another omnivorous "pond regular" is the **American Coot**, a slate-grey member of the rail family, with a white bill below a reddish dot or 'shield' on the

forehead, swimming and often walking about on their unusual, lobed-toed green feet. Toward spring the males become quite aggressive and chase each other about the pond, necks extended low over the water with two white, under-tail patches prominently displayed. Full battles may ensue with birds leaning back to kick with their feet or even holding one another underwater.

Sorting out the several species of gulls commonly found on the pond in winter presents a challenge to both beginning and advanced birdwatchers alike. The gulls to match in your field guide are: **Western, Ring-billed, Mew, California, Heerman's**, and, more rarely, the pale, **Glaucous-winged Gull**. The blotchy grey or brown gulls are juveniles. They assume the full adult plumages after three to four years and are best left to grow up before identifying. Adult Heerman's Gulls sport a gray, "winter plumage," but retain a bright orange bill with black tip. The Heerman's Gulls "winter" here in the summer and fall, well north of their breeding ground along the coast south of San Diego, in a kind of reverse migration pattern.



The four-foot-tall, stately grey-blue bird standing quietly on the island or protected shore or poised to strike into the water to grab a mosquito fish is the **Great Blue Heron**.

We often see a small bird active in the trees and shrubs adjacent to the pond, fluttering next to hanging leaves or poking about the huge *Gunnera chilensis* leaves gleaning aphids and other small insects. The bright spot of yellow on the lower back at the base of the tail identifies our most common winter warbler, the **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, also affectionately known as the "butter-butt." Exceptional adaptability of this warbler in human-shaped environments makes it another species whose population is increasing as other warblers are disappearing. Yellow-rumped Warblers exploit a wide variety of feeding strategies. With their "tweezer" bills, they primarily eat insects, which they grab from the air like flycatchers, glean from leaves while hovering like a kinglet or hummingbird, forage on the ground with sparrows in the hedgerow or on a lawn with robins. They will eat the white fruits of the *Dresina* palm. They make use of the winter-flowering blue gum eucalyptus, eating pollen-rich anthers and insects attracted to the flowers and will drive off the Anna's Hummingbirds who also seem to thrive in the San Francisco winter, thanks in part to the eucalyptus. These clever warblers will even flutter awkwardly at backyard hummingbird feeders sipping the sugar water.

EASTERN AUSTRALIA AND CHILE

Walking NW through the collections of plants from Eastern Australia and Chile, we keep an ear open for the high pitched calls of the **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** and the tiny **Bushtit**. From fall through early spring, these small bundles of energy move through the trees, such as the two large *Nothofagus obliqua* north of the walk, in mixed feeding flocks gleaning insects, spiders and small seeds. These noisy groups often include the bright yellow and black, **Townsend's Warbler** and the small, gray, hyperactive **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**. These species have slightly different feeding strategies and thus do not directly compete, while the many eyes and ears of the group provide

protection from predators as they forage as a loose-knit group through unfamiliar wintering territories.

On the left of the path, opposite the spreading *Mayten boaria* is a tall Laurel (*Cryptocarya rubra*). The many horizontal rows of small holes tell of the popularity of this tree with sapsuckers. If we scan through the tree we may find a mid-sized woodpecker resting vertically against a trunk or branch. The extensive red wash over head and upper breast identifies this as a **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, but look sharply at the head and chest as the **Red-naped Sapsucker** is occasionally spotted in this tree, quite far from its normal range in the Great Basin and mountains of Mexico.

JAPANESE MOON-VIEWING GARDEN

We move on to the Japanese Moon Viewing Garden. A small waterfall feeds a shallow stream which flows down to the moon-viewing pond. If we sit quietly on a rock our patience may be rewarded with views of hummingbirds bathing in the waterfall and of warblers, kinglets, and thrushes bathing in the shallow stream. This is a peaceful spot to stop for a rest. The birds, like ourselves, are attracted to the soft, bright sound of the flowing water.

Passing the Moon Viewing Garden we come out into the large open meadow and look back at the large, orange-fruited *Pittosporum* which faces south over the meadow. Now and again, in winter, this tree overflows with twittering flocks of **Cedar Waxwings**, one of our most beautiful migratory visitors. Their smooth, tawny-brown plumage, crest, and black mask make them a striking sight as they hang upside down and flutter through the foliage devouring the *Pittosporum* fruits.

SUCCULENT GARDEN

The Succulent Garden in the early spring is the place to watch hummingbird territorial combat. Competition for possession of flowering succulents is intense among the hummers. Courtship displays may be easily watched here as well. The male hovers above a concealed female, then, looking down at her all the while, rises straight up-and up-and up

before plunging down, pulling out of the dive at the last second with sharp whistle and ascends again to "sing" a few scratchy notes to its prospective mate. If you hear a sharp, short whistle followed by a little song, scan the sky above you to spot the bird ascending for its next performance. Males of both the Anna's and the Allen's hummingbirds perform such courtship displays in the vicinity of the succulent garden. Can you observe differences between the Allen's and Anna's hummingbirds?

Look closely at the tall dried stalks of the giant *Agaves* bordering the path along the north edge of the Succulent Garden. The holes in these stalks are nest holes drilled by the small, delicate **Downy Woodpecker**. The bold white patch down the back of this woodpecker helps distinguish it from the somewhat larger sapsucker; if there is a red spot on the back of the head, it's a male. The resident woodpeckers keep an eye on these holes and will drive away potential rivals even during the non-breeding months.



LOONS TO DUCKS

A **Yellow-Billed Loon** on Monterey Bay on Nov. 10, (DLSh), was a good record and the first reported this fall, while Red-Necked Grebe sightings came from many coastal locations throughout the month. Pelagic trips at the start of the month continued on from earlier with good seabird sightings and numbers. A trip to the Cordell Bank on Nov. 4 recorded 16 Black-footed Albatross, 2 Laysan Albatross, 300 Buller's Shearwaters and 12 Short-tailed Shearwaters, while a trip on Monterey Bay on Nov. 6 reported 8 Flesh-footed Shearwaters, 400 Buller's, 32 Short-tailed and 2 Black-vented shearwaters, with 1 Fork-tailed Storm-petrel also seen (ADeM). Sea watches from land during the month also proved very rewarding with good numbers of Northern Fulmars, Buller's Shearwaters and occasional Short-tailed Shearwaters reported offshore from Pigeon Point to San Francisco to Bodega Bay.

Duck sightings of note included a Green-winged Teal of the Eurasian subspecies at the Stevens Creek Mitigation Area, SCL, from Nov. 23 to 28, (MMR). Eurasian Wigeon reports came from many locations with a high of 4 reported from Bolinas Lagoon, MRN. The Harlequin Duck in Monterey remained through at least Nov. 14, while three others were seen at Glass Beach, Fort Bragg, MEN, on Nov. 12, (DT). Single Oldsquaws were reported from the Mendicino Headlands, MEN, the Fish Docks, PRNS, and at Pigeon Point, SM, during the month. As usual Lake Merritt in Oakland was the place to see Barrow's Goldeneye with good numbers seen all through the month with a high total of 60 birds.

RAPTORS TO LARIDS

Raptor reports included a continuing Bald Eagle at Lake Hennessy, NAPA, and scattered reports of Ferruginous Hawks from various interior locations.

Shorebirds of note included yet another Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, this time at Bodega Bay, SON, from Nov. 5 to 8, (LLu, BDP). Red Phalaropes proved numerous throughout the month with reports from many coastal locations including a grand total of 725 birds seen passing Pigeon Point during a seawatch on Nov. 26, (RSTh). The Franklin's Gull at the Sunnyvale Sewage Ponds, SCL, remained through Nov. 5 and what was most likely the same bird was seen at the Alviso Marina, SCL, from Nov. 11 to 15, (LHu, GFi).

The adult **Lesser Black-Backed Gull**, previously seen on only one day in October, was relocated by the same observer in early November and was eventually seen by many with the gull flock at the Alviso Marina throughout the month, (NLe, m.ob.). As previously noted last month, this is only the second Northern California record for this species, the last being in Monterey County in 1978. Again, Black Skimmers remained at Mountain View, SCL, with up to 3 birds seen regularly.

DOVES TO SHRIKES

A late report of a White-winged Dove on Nov. 26, (SMcA), came from Ferndale, HUM, one of very few reports this fall for this species. An adult Yellow-bellied Sapsucker returned to Ed Levin County Park, SCL, at the end of October and was seen throughout November. An immature bird was also seen there during the same period. Least Flycatcher reports continued into November with one at El Granada, SM, from Nov. 4 to 18, and another at the Laguna Honda Hospital, San Francisco, on Nov. 5 (DSg). The Eastern Phoebe remained at Owl Canyon, Bodega Bay, and looks set to spend the winter there. Single Tropical Kingbirds were reported from Bolinas and Nick's Cove, MRN, and Coyote Hills Regional Park, ALA, during the month. Mountain Bluebirds in the "hundreds" were seen at Panoche Valley, FRE, towards the end of

the month, and an interesting record of Sage Thrasher came from Steep Ravine Environmental Cabins, MRN, on Nov. 19, (AJ).

A **Black-backed Wagtail** turned up at high tide at Bolinas Beach, MRN, on Nov. 3 (KH). A subsequent search the following day did not relocate the bird. Black-backed Wagtail is an extremely rare bird in California with only 4 accepted records to date in the entire state, three of which were in Northern California. The only report of Northern Shrike was a single bird at MacArthur, SHA, on Nov. 18, (BY).

WARBLERS TO LONGSPURS

Interesting warbler sightings for the month included a Tennessee Warbler at Inverness, MRN, on Nov. 3 (Fide KH). Two Virginia's Warblers were reported, one at Gazos Creek, SM, on Nov. 9, (RSTh), and another at Half Moon Bay, SM, on Nov. 28, (BRe). Also seen at Frenchman's Creek, Half Moon Bay, SM, was a Lucy's Warbler, on Nov. 25, (DKe). Another was reported from Ferndale, HUM, on Nov. 26, (SMcA). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was seen on Nov. 1, (SC), at Owl Canyon, Bodega Bay, SON, while scattered reports of Nashville, Hermit, Palm, and Black-and-white warblers continued throughout the month from various coastal locations. Single Blackburnian Warblers turned up at Moss Beach, SM, on Nov. 5, (AME), and another again in San Mateo at Gazos Creek on Nov. 9, (RSTh). The latest report of Blackpoll Warbler came from Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, on Nov. 4 (MHe). A male American Redstart was at Mount Davidson, San Francisco, on Nov. 12, (DSg). Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, also had a Worm-eating Warbler on Nov. 19, (ASH) at Middle Lake, and a beautiful male Hooded Warbler at Mallard Lake seems to have taken up residence there after first being seen on Nov. 12, (CH, m.ob.).

An immature **Painted Bunting** was observed coming to a feeder in Santa Cruz, SCZ, from Nov. 3 to 17, (DLSu, BRe, m.ob.). As always with this species in Northern California the question of its "origin" comes into play, although the date of the record and the fact that it was an immature bird must surely make a strong case for its being a genuine vagrant. Almost all previously accepted records to date for this species in Northern California have been from the Farallon Islands. Thanks must go to the owners of the property at which this bird was seen, for their generosity in allowing access (and comfortable seating) for those who came to see this bird.

Reports of single Clay-colored Sparrows came from Ano Nuevo, SM, and San Jose in the middle of the month while up to 2 Lark Buntings were seen throughout the month at Panoche Valley, FRE/ SBT (RMrr). Reports of Swamp and White-throated sparrows began building up as the month progressed and a Harris's Sparrow was reported from Tule Lake, SIS, on Nov. 24 (RS). Numbers of longspurs dropped off rapidly from those recorded in October with the latest report of Lapland Longspur being of 2 individuals along with one Chestnut-collared Longspur at the RCA fields at PRNS, MRN, on Nov. 5, (CtL). An additional 12 Chestnut-collared Longspurs were reported from Bear Valley Ridge, HUM, on Nov. 10, (SMcA), with a Snow Bunting also at this location the same day. Finally a Bobolink remained at UC Davis, YOL, through Nov. 2.

The monthly observation column is generated from reports made to the Northern California Bird Box or to the author. Some sightings are unconfirmed and numbers of birds are often best regarded as estimates or "best guesses". In general, birds in boldface are very rare in our region, geographically or seasonally. Many of these are currently reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Observers are encouraged to provide written and/or photographic documentation to the CBRC, c/o Michael Patten, P.O. Box 51959, Riverside, CA 92517-2959 for any species currently on the review list. A list of review species can also be obtained from the CBRC secretary at the address above.

OBSERVERS: Florence G. Bennett, Andrew Birch, Ken Burton, Les Chibana, Suzanne Cogan, Chris Corbin, James Danzenbaker, Al DeMartini, Todd Easterla, Joe Eaton, Alan M. Eisner, Mike Feighner, George Finger, Les French, Harold Fuller, Gene Gerlach, Steve Glover, Philip E. Gordon, Edward G. Greaves, Keith Hansen (KH), Steve Hampton, Hugh Harvey, Mike Healy, Mike Heffernon, Christy Heim, Kevin Hints, Jim Holmes, Alan S. Hopkins, Richard Hoyer, Lisa Hug, Al Jeramillo, Dan Keller, Cin-ty Lee (CtL), Bill Lenarz, Nick Lethaby, Bob Lewis, Leslie Lieurance, Cindy Lieurance, Jim Lomax, Calvin Lou, Sean McAllister, Burt McKee, Dave McKenzic, Kevin McKerrigan, Robert Merrill, Steve Metze, Carol Miller, Mike Moran, Joseph Morlan, Dan P. Murphy, David Nelson, Dan Nelson, Todd Newberry, Bill Nobil, Benjamin D. Parmeter, David Powell, Peter Pyle, Bob Reiling, Bob Richmond, Jean M, Richmond, Lee Rctson, Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn, Paul Sarassini, Barry Sauppe, Rusty Scalf, Debra L. Shearwater, Doug Shaw, Daniel Singer (DSg), Rich Stallcup, John Sterling, David L. Suddjian, Will Taylor, Scott Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Dorothy Tobkin, Alan Wight, Adam Winer, Bob Yutzky

Data thanks to Joe Morlan and the Northern California Bird Box.

Abbreviations for counties; ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; FRE, Fresno; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; SBT, San Benito; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SIS, Siskiyou; SON, Sonoma; YOL, Yolo.

Update: Interesting reports from the beginning of December include the return of the Laysan Albatross to Point Arena, Mendocino County. This is presumably the same bird which spent the entire winter there last year and was seen, I believe, on one occasion with another Laysan Albatross. Has this bird been named yet? Also the Hooded Warbler and Worm-eating Warbler remain in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Full details in next months *Observations*.

HELP WANTED FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR

The above heading appeared in *The Gull* more than eight years ago. Russ Wilson responded, and has been our Field Trip Coordinator ever since, however he recently informed the Board of Directors that by the end of next summer he would like to be replaced.

The sooner a member volunteers to fill his shoes, the easier the transition will be. Russ has offered to work with his successor during the coming months and will continue to help, if called upon, even after turning the position over to his replacement.

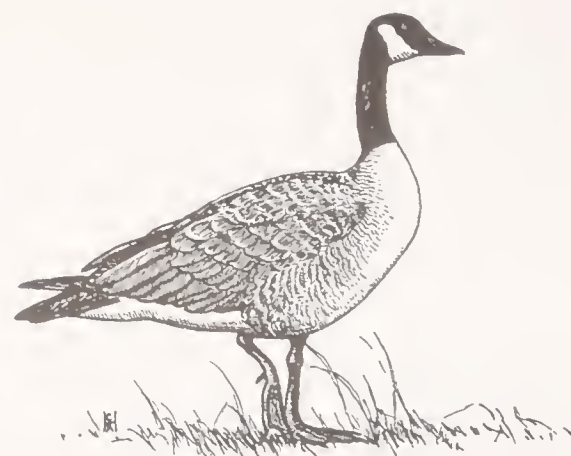
The main function of the coordinator is to contact leaders, schedule field trips, and write them up for *The Gull*, and, when possible, recruit new leaders and develop new trips. Fortunately, GGAS has many faithful leaders who can usually be depended upon to repeat favorite trips, thereby simplifying the coordinator's work. Why don't you consider applying for this position, or perhaps co-chairing it with a friend? Call Russ Wilson. (510) 524-2399; he will be glad to answer your questions.

PANAMA COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Panama Committee will be:

Monday, January 8
Monday, February 12

Call Corinne Stefanek at (510) 769-8931 for further information about meeting time and location.



This back yard birder has become a front yard birder as well. My "new" old house has a wonderful English garden that buzzes with hummingbirds and during the warm weather attracted fabulous butterflies. Yet another wonderful kitchen window affords me a view of the garden terraced with cobblestones. Here I feast my eyes on white and pink roses (obviously I have a deer fence!) and penstemon, purple salvia, blue delphiniums, lobelia, and mallow, even hollyhocks. The birds and butterflies are literally feasting on the same. The potato vine on the white picket fence screens me from the street. You can imagine why I fell in love with this house!

The back yard is actually a huge deck perched on a steep, oak-covered slope with a bird's eye view of the hollow. In fall, splashes of yellow lombardy poplars and orange and red liquidambers and maples contrasted with the many evergreens. During the holidays the hills are alive with twinkling lights on dark, clear nights. As we lay in bed one September night, we watched a huge harvest moon as it rose. We can check out the weather just by opening our eyes. The bird feeder is hung nearby so I can watch the action as I come alive again. Living above a hollow gives new meaning to the word. Sounds bounce up from below: dogs' barking, children's happy voices from the school, workers' saws and hammers. All this reminds me of the outside world.

Because the valley below is a gap, it serves as a route between Briones Dam and Lake Cascade as well as Lafayette Reservoir and assorted ponds. I am in the unique position of looking DOWN on ducks and geese flapping by. Turkey Vultures and hawks often wheel below--once a "kettle" of 30 or so T.V.s boiled upward in the sky.

Flanking our house on each back corner stand two huge pines. Despite their being a fire hazard, they are a joy since they attract all manner of birds in

their huge branches. The Great Horned Owls are numerous and we often hear them in stereo as they hoot it up from both trees. At dusk I've heard as many as 5 owls calling back and forth. Chickadees, both Red-breasted and White-breasted nuthatches, and juncos as well as both jays found my feeder in jiffy time. The oak trees on our property as well as on East Bay MUD land attract nuthatches, warblers and Acorn and Nuttall's woodpeckers, and flickers like the power pole on the street.

The main diner at my feeder has been a squirrel. His acrobatics were a scream but he made a huge mess that even the greediest birds couldn't keep up with. Finally Dick foiled him by suspending the feeder by a long coat hanger. No guilty feelings here -- he's already the fattest squirrel in town. I think I'll also ask Santo for a squirrel-proof feeder. The jays provide enough feed for the ground feeding birds. One of the Fox Sparrows looks absurd without any tail feathers -- wonder how he lost them? He's very chubby looking and I wonder how he puts on the brakes without them. Never having had nuthatches at my last feeder I'm thrilled to see them so closely.

Another bonus of my new house is that I have to drive past a pond on my way to town. It's always been a favorite spot to scout because it's had so many interesting birds over the years: Wood Ducks, Great Blue Heron, Green-backed Heron, Hooded-Merganser, Ruddy Ducks, Bufflehead, Mallards, even Yellowlegs.

So here I am, all settled in, waiting for the next surprise to land in my yard -- front or back, it doesn't matter. It was worth the move!

GALAPAGOS 1996 - THE TRIP

Dear GGAS Members and Friends,

The Galapagos Islands were always at the top of my short list of natural places in the world that I most wanted to visit and experience. Perhaps it was the lure of warm aquamarine seas teeming with sea lions, fur seals, large marine turtles and brilliant fishes. Or maybe it was the promise of large colorful birds that were so easily visible, either because of size or lack of fear of predators, that you simply couldn't miss seeing them - that you, in fact, had to move carefully to avoid stepping on them, or their nests. Or that you might experience a sense of historical connection with Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution.

I am happy to report that last spring my husband, Don, and I did travel to Galapagos and it was as good, if not better, than anticipated. Armed with that testimonial, Golden Gate Audubon has planned with Park East Tours an eight-day cruise in November, 1996, to the Galapagos Islands plus several extra excursion days into the countryside near Quito, Ecuador, to see volcanoes, land birds and local village life.

If you have ever entertained the notion of swimming with fur seals and watching Waved Albatross waddle along beside you, then Galapagos is definitely a destination for you. Call the GGAS office, (510) 843-2222, for a brochure and exact dates and costs.

Did I mention the marine iguanas? Hope you'll come on board with GGAS to the Galapagos and Ecuador.

Barbara Rivenes



Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, January 6

Palo Alto Baylands

Meet at 8 a.m. Take Hwy. 101 south to Palo Alto; exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the airport and Baylands Nature Center. Continue beyond the airport to the duck pond (on the left) and park at the east end. Bring lunch, scopes and clothes appropriate for rain and mud. We should see waterfowl, rails and shorebirds. Trip will end in mid-afternoon. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074 (*)

Wednesday, January 10

Mini-trip to Arrowhead Marsh

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the marsh. Take Hwy. 880 (Nimitz) to the Hegenberger Rd./Oakland Airport exit. Drive west to Doolittle Drive and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan Way. Turn left after about a block and follow the sign to the marsh (Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline). Park in the second parking lot on the left. We will look for Burrowing Owls, shorebirds and waterfowl. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean Marie Spoelman.

Saturday, January 20

Delta Area; Lodi, Woodbridge Rd., and Staten Island

Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot of Rocky's Restaurant at the intersection of I-5 and State Hwy. 12. From the Bay Area, take Hwy. 580 to Hwy. 205 and continue east beyond Tracy to I-5. Go north on I-5 about 14 miles beyond Stockton to the intersection of Hwy. 12. (From the North Bay, an alternate route would be to take Hwy. 12 out of Fairfield and Rio Vista to the intersection of I-5.)

We will caravan to the Lodi sewage ponds looking for rare shorebirds and gulls and then to Staten Island for Sandhill Cranes and waterfowl, including Tundra Swans and Snow Geese. Dress warmly and be prepared for rain. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: David Yee, (209) 951-1526. (*)

Noteworthy: David Yee, who has led this trip for GGAS for the past eleven years, has been a Regional Editor for *American Birds/Audubon Field Notes* for the last eight years.

Sunday, January 21

Upper San Leandro Reservoir, Moraga

Meet at 9 a.m. in the Valle Vista Staging Area for a half-day trip. Take Hwy. 24 to Orinda and exit on Moraga Way (right at the stoplight at the base of the exit ramp). Continue approx. four miles to Canyon Rd. Turn right at traffic signal and continue 1.2 miles to Valle Vista Staging Area on left.

Grassy hills, pines, oaks and open water provide varied habitats for landbirds and wintering waterfowl. We will hike about four miles in hilly terrain. Rain cancels. Leader: David George (510) 339-0765.

Saturday, February 3

Lake Merced, San Francisco

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Ocean Beach parking lot by the intersec-

tion of Sloat Blvd. and Great Highway. This is a good time to see grebes and other wintering waterfowl. Lunch is optional for this half-day trip, Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983 (*).

Saturday, February 3

Panoche Valley

Meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 in Paicines, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. From there we will drive east to I-5 south of Los Banos. Last year this raptor habitat produced Golden Eagles, Merlin, and Prairie Falcons, plus Mountain Bluebirds, Phainopeplas and Vesper Sparrows. Considering the distance involved in this trip be sure to fill your gas tank before leaving Hollister, and carpool from the Bay Area if possible. Bring lunch and warm clothes. Rain cancels. Leader: Chris Carpenter (510) 569-9281 day, (510) 547-2427 eve. (*)

Sunday, February 4

Lake Merritt, Oakland

Meet at 9 a.m. at Grand Ave. and El Embarcadero by the Greek Colonade. Bring binoculars, scope, and a field guide if you have them. This is an excellent opportunity to observe wintering ducks and grebes at close range, and to study their field identification. This trip is recommended for beginners and is wheelchair accessible. Trip ends at noon. Rain cancels. Leader: Joan Zawaski (415) 433-1700 days; (510) 530-2427 eve. (*)

Wednesday, February 14

Mini-trip to Coyote Hills Regional Park

Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot by the Visitors' Center at the end of the road.

From the East Bay take I-880 south to Newark and turn right at Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Continue west and exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy.; turn right and continue north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow the signs to Coyote Hills.

From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 south beyond Redwood City, cross the Dumbarton Bridge and exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy.; go north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow signs to Coyote Hills.

We will be looking for three species of teal and other wintering waterfowl. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 & Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$ (*)

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sights that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (*). See below.

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chair. (510) 524-2399.

January Meeting: Great Blue Herons Up Close and Personal

Randall Junior Museum, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco
Thursday, January 11, 7:30 p.m.

For the past three years, Great Blue Herons have been courting, mating, nesting and reproducing on an island in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

Tom Henry, from a vantage point of only one hundred feet away, has been photographing their most intimate and banal moments. Tom's slides capture the spectacular courtship displays, and mating rituals of these charismatic birds.



Nancy DeStefanis, Golden Gate Audubon member and San Francisco site coordinator for the Colonial Waterbird Monitoring Program of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, has been closely observing and collecting data on the behavior of the nesting herons. (These are the only herons nesting in San Francisco.)

Join Tom and Nancy for a lively discussion and slide show on these beautiful and exciting birds. The program will conclude with an accordion rendition of "My Blue Herons" by Nancy and friends.

ROSTER

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Northern California Bird Box
(510) 524-5592

5 species of loon have been seen in California

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Tues.- Fri. 9-12, 1-4

It's January - it's cold - the birds are hungry. The GGAS office still has a good supply of seed. Pick up some now and delight your feathered buddies.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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